

# THE PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRER

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER BY THE SENATE PRESS OFFICE  
June & July 2022

## Independence Day 2022

A CONVERSATION WITH FORMER  
HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER LARRY WALKER

### *Were there horse stables in the Capitol Basement?*

Georgia's Connections to  
the Declaration of Independence

Get to Know Senate District 5  
JUNE IS BLACK MUSIC MONTH

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

# THE PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRER

A Monthly Newsletter by The Senate Press Office



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# The Long and Narrow Road

*A Conversation with Larry Walker*

By Rachel Moore, Communications Associate



If you try to place your finger down on a map to locate the most central spot in the state, odds are you won't land too far away from Perry, Georgia. The central Georgia town, located just south of Macon and named after famed War of 1812 Captain Oliver Hazard Perry, has a reputation for being quiet, sleepy even. One would almost be forgiven if they did not know that this town was, and still is to some degree, a hub of political power and influence for the entire state. While many political men have called Perry home, the patriarch of this Middle Georgia political dynasty is Larry Walker.

It was a hot and humid Friday morning in the early days of June. Downtown Perry was peaceful and calm, with only a few cars passing the Old Courthouse square every few minutes. Walker, in his silver Ford pickup truck honked the horn three times as he passed, signaling to say hello as he waved while crossing through Main Street. He was on his way to the office.

Established in 1965 and founded by none other than the man himself, Walker, Hulbert, Gray and Moore, LLP, is Walker's legacy and his life. Most days, the eponymous Walker handles his various legal cases as an attorney, representing individuals, small businesses, corporations, banking institutions, municipal governments and all aspects of real estate – 909 Ball Street is a longstanding symbol of his devotion to the people of Perry.



Within moments of entering the building, you are submerged in the passion and dedication that Walker and his firm have held strong for fifty-seven years. As you walk down the hallway, the walls are lined with portraits of past and present partners, illustrating the many years of history that have made WHGM what it is today. Upon entering Walker's office, you are engulfed with decades of memories that he holds close to his heart. From his young life, to precious moments with his family and even more so, his time as a political figure serving in the Georgia House of Representatives. You are left with no doubt this man played a role in Georgia politics – a big one. Along one wall are framed documents certifying each of his 16 electoral victors to the Georgia House of Representatives. Framed photographs lined most every available surface, many of which featured Tom Murphy, the Speaker of the Georgia House for over 30 years and longtime friend and former United States Senator, Sam Nunn.

If there is one thing that all people know to be true about Walker, it is that he loves to share his fond memories and trust me, you will love to listen. Walker was born in Macon, Georgia on March 9, 1942. While he may not have been born in Houston County, he has been a resident of the county his entire life. Walker laughs as he says he was only in Macon for about a week, then he came to Houston County and has been here ever since. During his young life, Walker spent summers doing just about everything, making syrup with his grandmother Walker, working in Walker Country Store with his granddaddy and father, selling peanuts in Downtown Perry with his brother David, the list goes on and on. Walker says that he is so grateful for these experiences. They taught him how to work with people and even get to know people. There's an old saying that life is a little about *what* you know and a lot about *who* you know and Walker knows this well. As Walker got older, he attended the public schools in Perry, graduating from Perry High School in 1960.



During these times, he was active in his community and in his school playing both football and basketball for Perry High School. During his basketball career, Walker was coached by Coach Eric Staples or “Fessor” as Perryans called him. Under ‘Fessor’s leadership, Perry became the mecca of high school basketball although Walker will joke and tell you the year he was on the team was the only year that the Panthers did not contribute to Coach ‘Fessor’s winning streak – perhaps too many push-ups on the football field. Walker then went on to the University of Georgia, earning a Bachelor’s of Business Administration at UGA’s Terry College of Business and a Juris Doctorate from The University of Georgia’s School of Law. So, by 1965, he was back in Perry practicing law and at the ripe young age of twenty-three, Walker was also serving as a Municipal Court Judge. Perhaps one of his fondest memories was in June of 1965 as Walker says that this was the most eventful time in his life, receiving the relieving news that he had passed the bar exam, buying a house with his wife Janice, and welcoming his first son into the world, Lawrence Cohen Walker, III.



But the history doesn’t stop there. A short drive past the Georgia National Fairgrounds and Agriculture Center, across Larry Walker Parkway and down Marshallville Road, you will arrive at Southern Oaks of Houston, nearly 500 acres of true Walker country. After weaving through rows of freshly planted pecan trees, the silver Ford pickup truck pulled up to a large, white barn as *Lady in Red* by Chris de Burgh aired softly on the truck’s radio. A view from the outside may not look like much but as you pass through the doors, you will find each and every available surface covered in newspaper clippings, photographs, awards, trophies and yard signs for every major political campaign in Georgia going back to the 1970’s. One such poster featured “The Wild Man from Sugar Creek ” himself, Eugene Talmadge. Suspended high in the roof beams was the Georgia state flag from the years of 2001 to 2003. Walker’s collection of political ephemera is unmatched by anyone in Georgia, and likely by anyone in the country. The barn serves as a sanctuary, a place for friends and family to gather and celebrate, just as Walker and over 260 of his closest friends and family did just a few short weeks ago to celebrate he and his wife Janice’s 80th birthdays. One section of the wall in the barn is dedicated to Walker’s own personal campaign memorabilia. A large cut-out of the vote counts from his first election to the state House, to a few of his yard signs from throughout the years. Upon being asked why he chose a white and green color scheme for his campaign signs he replied, “I figured if it was good enough for the DOT, it was good enough for me.” They proved to be more than good enough, as Walker’s 32 years in the state legislature prove.





His reputation did not appear out of thin air or form overnight. Over time, Walker's reputation grew and he was made City Attorney, a role that his firm filled for decades following. But upon receiving his Juris Doctorate, it wasn't long after that he found himself at a crossroads, having to decide between two practices to kick start his legal career. He had already made a commitment to a particular firm in the area but, shortly after, Walker was offered a position with the father of Former United States Senator Sam Nunn. Troubled by what decision he should make, Walker remarked on the many times he went to see his father about the

matter. His father Cohen, an exemplary Georgian, was a monumental figure in not only Walker's life, but Perry's as well. Cohen came to Perry as an Agricultural teacher, the first vocational teacher in Houston County. Cohen served on the Houston County School Board for twenty years, each year being reelected as Chairman. Walker knew exactly what his father was going to say to him about the matter, but he still wanted to speak to him anyway. "You can't start



out that way son," Cohen explained to him. Had he chosen to work for Senator Sam Nunn's father, the opportunity to run for political office in the Georgia House of Representatives may not have ever presented itself and deciding to run for political office was no simple decision. The job of a public servant means being an advocate of many and while Walker was no stranger to the task, he knew this choice would have no small impact on his life. When asked how he made the



decision Walker replied, "I was the big fish and I could do what I wanted to but I decided I would go see my Daddy one more time." Walker found comfort in consulting with his father, something many of us can relate to. And after much thought and conversation with Walker, Sr., the young Walker had thought he had arrived at a decision. "After the word was out about my interests in running for office, I told the Houston Home Journal, Houston County's legal organ and local paper, that I would let them know before anyone else," Walker commented. "And with that, I told my Daddy that I wasn't going to run." And with no hesitation, Cohen responded with "Larry I think you might ought to reconsider that." And so he did. Upon entering the daunting world of politics, Walker suddenly felt as if he was no longer the big fish but rather the little fish in a big pond commenting that he "didn't really know how he was going to do." In the early 1970's, campaigning for political office looked a lot different from how it looks in today's world of politics. Spending only \$3,000 on his campaign, Walker remarked on how he was essentially "doing it all by myself." His opponent was an "interesting" man as Walker described him. Walker was running for the 141st House District encompassing Houston, Macon and Schley Counties. On election day, Walker made his rounds to each precinct and upon arrival to Schley County, he and his opponent shared a brief conversation. "You've been telling the district you're going to beat me, tell me what you really think is going to happen," Walker said. "If I'm going to do anything



"I'll carry Schley County I can promise you that," replied Walker's opponent. Much to his opponents surprise, Walker carried Schley County 808-202, nearly 80% of the vote. Upon his opponents defeat, and as a further testament to his likability, Walker was kind enough to handle the legal aspects of closing his house when he eventually moved from Perry.

Upon assuming office, Walker was seated by members of House Leadership at the time, including Representatives James H. Sloppy Floyd and Joe Frank Harris, the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. Both were well-respected members of the legislature and offered a great deal of advice for the young Walker. Forming relationships was important as Walker commented that he and Joe Frank Harris got to be "great friends," a friendship that still stands strong today. While not officially a member of leadership himself, the relationships he formed with these lawmakers, among others, helped bring him into the fold. At the beginning of Walker's first term, George L. Smith held the position of Speaker of the House. That December, Speaker Smith unfortunately passed, leaving the seat of Speaker of the House up for grabs. Walker recounts that he remembered this time well and would never forget when Harris told him, "Larry, we're going to be for Tom Murphy." With a slight chuckle, Walker described that Harris didn't ask him, he told him to which Walker replied, "OK." Fortunately for Walker and prior to Murphy's appointment to Speaker of the House, his relationship with Murphy was already forming. Walker and Murphy both shared a liking for fishing so, each year Walker would bring Murphy down to Houston County to fish. Walker laughed as he relived the memory saying "wow did we catch a lot of fish."



During the 1982 gubernatorial election, Walker threw his support behind his House colleague and dear friend Joe Frank Harris. Harris was widely viewed as a longshot, with ten candidates running in the Democratic primary alone. Longshot though he might have been, Walker never hesitated to support his friends. Walker once told his wife, "Janice, we need to do all we can to help Joe Frank, and even if he does not win, we can take satisfaction in knowing that we supported a fine man." The favorite in the race, Bo Ginn, served in the U.S. House for ten years and received 35% of the vote in the primary to Harris' 24%. In the runoff, however, Harris bested Ginn with 54% of the vote and easily beat his General Election opponent, Robert Bell. After his inauguration as Georgia's 78th Governor, Harris selected Walker to serve as his floor leader, meaning that he would



A prolific writer, Walker has published two books and had served as a contributing author to *James Magazine* for decades. His work largely focuses on the intersection of southern culture and politics and his articles run the gambit from lists of best-dressed legislators, to the shifting attitudes of Georgia's major political parties. His two books, *Life on the Gnat Line* and *Tales from Georgia's Gnat Line*, highlight Walker's upbringing.



be responsible for carrying the Governor's priority pieces of legislation in the House. "I was very honored to be his floor leader," Walker remarked. At the time, the Governor selected one floor leader in each legislative chamber, as well as two assistants. One such assistant in the House was Rep. Calvin Smyre. After Walker was elected to serve as House Majority Leader in 1986, Gov. Harris made the historic move of appointing Rep. Smyre as the first African-American in history to serve as a Governor's Floor Leader. Walker himself actually had the historic opportunity to serve as Floor Leader and Majority Leader simultaneously after being asked by Gov. Zell Miller to assume the role during his governorship.

Throughout his sixteen terms in the House, Walker never lost sight of the people of Perry and the community he loves so dearly. Perhaps one of the most economically significant and nostalgic icons of Perry is the Georgia National Fairgrounds and Agricenter, something Walker has taken great pride in securing the funding for during his service. "I never could have imagined that the fairgrounds would have impacted Houston County in the way that they have today. The fair has been a great thing for the economy and for young Georgians," Walker commented.

But perhaps one of the most monumental moments in Walker's political career was under Barnes' administration when the State Flag was changed. As the carrier of the bill, Walker believed that a change in the flag would be inevitable and now, even for a self-described "son of the south"; Walker knew that shifting attitudes made a change in Georgia's state flag not only necessary, but inevitable. Conversation went long into the evening as the House debated the legislation that would change the face of Georgia history. Walker recounted the night as he described the atmosphere as the most "electric" he had ever witnessed during his 32 years. Speaker Murphy asked Walker to be the last speaker in the well to close the debate. As he made his closing remarks Walker stated, "I am a son of the south. In a sea of southern accents mine is the most pronounced. When I watch the movie Gettysburg and I see those boys in gray try to take that hill, I want them to take it. I can't help it but it's time for us to make a change." Walker loves the south, he loves his community and more importantly, he loves the State of Georgia. While that flag may not have flown for Georgia long, it still flies in Walker's barn at Southern Oaks, a symbol of honor for the state he loves so dearly.



On July 1, 1985, legislation was passed to create the Georgia Agricultural Exposition Authority. The Committee was led by Chairman Gene Sutherland and Foster Rhodes.  
*Photo Courtesy of the Georgia National Fairgrounds and Agricenter*







Ray Charles with Rep. Peggy Childs and Speaker of the House, Tom Murphy - 1979  
*Photo Courtesy of Georgia State University*

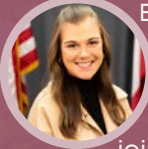
Serving so many years in the state legislature, you are bound to be present for some exceptional moments. It was in 1979, however, that Walker witnessed what he called “the most fun day in the 32 years I served in the Legislature.” On this day, Ray Charles was escorted into the House Chamber and took his seat in the front row. Through some brilliant A/V work for the time, a connection was established to Hoagy Carmichael, the man who penned the song, to give his remarks on the occasion. After this introduction, Ray Charles attended to a piano set up just in front of the rostrum and played the tune. Sensing the magnitude of the moment, former Georgia Secretary of State Benjamin Fortson called it “a rare moment that was able to bring the minds and hearts of the Georgia legislature together.”

At the turn of the 21st Century, Walker found himself in the middle of changing party politics in Georgia. No longer were the Democrats the dominant party, as Sonny Perdue became Georgia’s first Republican governor since reconstruction. When asked if he ever considered changing his party affiliation to Republican, as many of his colleagues did, Walker said he never considered it. “The Democratic Party had been good to me and I never considered changing parties.”

Life is full of choices. Some may be bad and some may be good, but no matter good or bad, those choices have the ability to dramatically impact one’s life. Of course, the hope is that the choices we make will turn out well in the end. But no man knows the value of choices better than Lawrence Cohen Walker, Jr. or “Larry” as he lives by the mantra of “always measure twice and cut once.” The City of Perry’s official motto is “Where Georgia Comes Together.” As a man who has worked for us, no single person better embodies that spirit than Larry Walker, a true Georgian. It won’t take long to feel honored and humbled in his presence. Revisiting some of his fondest memories throughout his political and legal career is something one could never grow tired of. It is not every day that one could be so blessed to be at the mercy of such wisdom and kindness. It is people like Larry who are at the epicenter of what it means to be an exemplary Georgian. Throughout his decades of public service, Walker demonstrated a passion for working with Republicans and Democrats, Urban and Rural factions, and anyone else he could to improve the lives of all Georgians.

When his son, Larry Walker, III was elected to the Georgia Senate in 2015, Walker, with his three decades of political wisdom, offered just one simple piece of advice to his son – “Be nice to everyone.” He is quick to call you a friend – and he means it. Larry Walker represents all that is good about politics. He was never in it for fame, power or publicity. He is a man with a servant’s heart whose every thought continues to revolve around how he can best help his beloved Houston County. In Larry Walker’s farewell speech on the House Floor in 2004, he quoted one of his favorite hymns called My Tribute. In that hymn is the line, “How can I say thanks, For the things You have done for me? Things so undeserved, Yet You gave to prove Your love for me. The voices of a million angels could not express my gratitude.” The same could be said for you, Larry.

### About the Author



Born and raised in Houston County, GA, Rachel Moore joined the Senate Press Office as a Communications Associate in January of 2022. A graduate of the University of Georgia, Rachel holds a Bachelors of Arts in Communications Studies.



# Georgia: The Reluctant Revolutionary

By Sophie Stepakoff, Communications Associate

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It's June of 1776. The chosen delegates from each of the thirteen colonies arrive and participate in debate at the Second Continental Congress, debate that would lead to the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Some debaters are younger than others, but all are men who are generally well-educated and well-renowned among the people of their respective colonies.

In the fall of 1774, delegates from twelve of the thirteen colonies convened in Carpenter's Hall in Philadelphia to participate in the First Continental Congress to hold discussions on how best to economically penalize Great Britain for their perceived aggressions toward the colonies. Opinions still differed as to how best seek redress for their grievances, however, and several delegates actually proposed plans to remain united with Great Britain or even to form a mutually beneficial alliance. Ultimately, the First Continental Congress produced the Petition to the King (famously never read by the king himself), as well as establish the Continental Association, a formal organization to boycott British goods. However, the decision was made that if Britain did not take appropriate steps to address these grievances, the Congress would re-convene in the following year to discuss further steps.

While the Continental Congress convened in Philadelphia, the lone colony without a delegate, Georgia, pondered its place among the colonies. As the newest of all the colonies (formally becoming a royal colony in 1752), Tory (or loyalist) sympathies, understandably, still ran high. Additionally, James Wright, who had served as Georgia's royal governor since 1760, enjoyed popularity amongst the colonists. As a testament to his leadership, Georgia was the only colony to continue to import stamps after the passage of the Stamp Act in 1765. Many Georgians considered a relationship with Great Britain essential in order to provide security on the frontier, as well to serve as a trading partner for Georgia's booming, but still infant, industries. With a popular Governor and a strong economy, a war with Britain was not considered to be in the best interest of colonial Georgians.

As the years dragged on, however, revolutionary sentiment eventually reached Georgia. On January 18, 1775, a provisional congress was established in Savannah to discuss the matter of banning trade with Great Britain, at the urging of the Continental Congress. Elected as President of the 1775 Provincial Congress of Georgia was Archibald Bulloch, who was subsequently elected by the body to serve as a representative to the Second Continental Congress. Aside from Bulloch, John Houstoun and John Joachim Zubly were also chosen to serve as delegates. Houstoun originally declined, but eventually accepted the appointment and was seated later in 1775. Zubly took his seat in September of 1775, but carried with him a strong loyalist sentiment. After voicing his general disagreements over how the conflict with Britain should proceed and due to his strong personal friendship with Royal Governor James Wright, Zubly was ordered to be arrested for disloyalty. He managed to escape arrest and lived in exile for the remainder of the war.

By April 1775, the tension in the colonies had escalated to bloodshed, when shots were fired between the British and colonial militia at the towns of Lexington and Concord. While a Second Continental Congress had already been established, their work took on new importance at the outbreak of the war. With continued reluctance from Georgia's delegates, St. John's Parish (located in present day Liberty County), acted independently and sent Lyman Hall to serve as a delegate from Georgia. However, due to continued uncertainty over how Georgia should proceed, he did not, at first, participate in any votes.



**Lyman Hall**



By 1776, Georgia's delegates at the Second Continental Congress received some reinforcements. George Walton, born in Virginia, had previously studied law in Savannah. After serving as the Secretary of the Second Provisional Congress in Georgia and as President of the Council of Safety (an of-shoot of the Committees of Correspondence), he was selected to serve as a delegate in Philadelphia to represent the Patriot cause. Button Gwinnett was actually the only Georgia signer not to have been born in North America, having lived his early life in England. After moving to Savannah in 1765, he attempted to become a planter. However, when the revolutionary wave reached Georgia in 1775, Gwinnett became more politically active and earned his position as a delegate to the Second Continental Congress.

During the summer of 1776, work began to finalize a formal separation of ties from England. Georgia was not alone in its hesitancy to formally sever ties with Great Britain. Even at the Congress, delegates presented a wide variety of alternatives to succession. Richard Henry Lee of Virginia eventually convinced his peers to adopt the "Resolution for Independence", otherwise known as the "Lee Resolution." This document, approved on July 2, 1776, formally separated the Thirteen Colonies from the British Empire. Much of the Lee Resolution made its way into the more formal and expanded Declaration of Independence, adopted by Congress two days later on July 4, 1776, with the signature of John Hancock who served as president of the Congress.

While Hancock was the first, he was also the only person to sign the Declaration on that day. Georgia's signers, Gwinnett, Walton and Hall, signed the Declaration in August 2nd, 1776. Much to the disappointment of John Adams, there was one Georgian who left the Continental Congress early in May of 1776, just months before he had the opportunity to sign the Declaration. In a letter from Archibald Bulloch to John Adams, he explained his rationale for leaving the Congress early was to participate in the Revolution in his home state.

*I was greatly disappointed, Sir, in the Information you gave me, that you should be prevented from revisiting Philadelphia. I had flattered myself with Hopes of your joining Us soon, and not only affording Us the additional Strength of your Abilities and Fortitude...Your Colleagues Hall and Gwinnett, are here in good Health, and Spirits, and as firm as you yourself could wish them. - John Adams to Archibald Bulloch, 1776*



*The Ministry never conceived that the Infant Colony of Georgia wou'd so daringly oppose their iniquitous Measures, and notwithstanding the great Number amongst us, under the Influence of Government, that we shou'd so ardently and successfully follow the glorious Examples of our Northern Brethren. - Archibald Bulloch to John Adams, 1776*

In 1818, the famous painting depicting the moment in which the Declaration of Independence was presented before Congress was unveiled by John Trumbell. Amongst the portrayals of 47 of the signers, you can make out the face of George Walton in the back.



The Declaration of Independence by John Trumbell  
Source: AOC.gov



In the years that followed, Georgia's participants in the signing of the Declaration left a lasting legacy, both throughout the state, as well as the nation. Lyman Hall returned to Georgia to find most of his estate burned by the British. In the later years of the war, he returned to Savannah and, in 1783, was elected Governor. Though he only held the position for one year, he was a strong supporter of chartering a state university and was instrumental in formally establishing the University of Georgia in 1785.

George Walton went on to hold a number of positions in state politics including Governor (1779), a member of the Augusta Board of Commissioners (1784 and 1785), a superior court judge (1790), U.S. Senator (1795) and was instrumental in the adoption of Georgia's State Constitution.

Button Gwinnett served in Georgia's State Legislature, eventually holding the position of Speaker of the Georgia Assembly. In 1777, he wrote the first draft of the Georgia Constitution to be considered by the Assembly, but was elevated to serve as Georgia's Governor following the death of Governor Bulloch in February of 1777. After years of fierce rivalry between Gwinnett and Lachlan McIntosh (the commander of Georgia's military), Gwinnett challenged McIntosh to a duel in May of 1777. While both were wounded, Gwinnett eventually succumbed to the gunshot a few days later.



**Button Gwinnett**

Today, a granite obelisk stands in Augusta, Georgia to recognize Georgia's three signers of the Declaration. Beneath its foundation lie the remains of Hall and Walton, but the remains of Gwinnett proved impossible to locate. The Signer's Monument serves as a reminder of Georgia's contributions to the revolutionary movement and, though reluctant to act in the Revolution's early days, its steadfast support in establishing the United States.



*The Signers' Monument*

*Source: Georgia Historical Society*

### About the Author



Sophie Stepakoff has lived in Georgia since she was five, residing in DeKalb, Cobb, and Fulton Counties at different points in life. She studied English at Kennesaw State University before working at the Senate Press Office.



# Moonlight Through the Pines

## Reflections on Black Music Month

By Keenan Rogers, Broadcast Specialist

In 1967, the hottest ticket in town was to see Otis Redding perform "Try a Little Tenderness" at the Monterey Pop Music Festival. The King of Soul was enjoying his best year as a musician, having sold more records than Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin combined, and was well on his way to cementing his legacy as an innovator in the language of music. In a sweet smooth tone with just the right touch of vibrato, the crooner sang his way into the hearts of America and changed music as we know it. A few months later, at the young age of 26, the Macon native would record his biggest hit yet singing the immortal lyrics, "I left my home in Georgia headed for the Frisco bay", putting Georgia on the map as the place to be for music. Clearly there is something way down yonder on the Chattahoochee because Georgia has produced an abundance of giants in the music industry. Having over 80 #1 hits and upwards of 60 Grammys is no easy task, but Black artists from



Copyright Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Courtesy of Georgia State University.

Georgia have stood the test of time through their work and helped shape music as we know it. That is why we celebrate these visionaries and all their achievements throughout the month of June, known as Black Music Month.

"A wop bop a loo bop, a wop bam boo," a transcendent lyric that has stood the test of time. The famous line was authored by the Architect of Rock N' Roll, Georgia's own Little Richard, while he was simply washing dishes. Little Richard was born in Macon, Georgia in 1932 and was raised singing in his church's gospel choir. He credits his gospel music background for helping him discover the style of music and voice he has become famous for. Known for his eccentric performances, and a vocal range that reached into the stratosphere, Little Richard paved the way for not only for musicians of the future, but Black musicians of the future. Jimi Hendrix said that he "wanted to use his guitar like Little Richard uses his voice". Richard is also credited with inspiring one of the greatest bands of all time, The Beatles. Back in 1962, both The Beatles and Little Richard were headlining shows in Hamburg, Germany when Little Richard invited the band to play with him.



Sir Paul McCartney said "I owe a lot of what I do to Little Richard and his style, and he knew it. "He would say, 'I taught Paul everything he knows', and he was right". From the streets of Macon, to teaching Sir Paul McCartney how to warm up his vocal chords, to being inducted into the Rock n' Roll Hall of Fame in 1986; Little Richard is was truly a treasure from Georgia. The Innovator, the Originator, the Emancipator, the Architect of Rock 'N' Roll; Little Richard.



Little Richard with The Beatles following a show in 1962

There could have been no Architect of Rock N' Roll without the Mother of the Blues, Ma Rainey. Born in Columbus, Georgia in 1886 to two performer parents, Ma, or "Gertrude" as she was known before she was famous, quickly took up singing and started performing around town. Her first show was at the famous Springer Opera House in Downtown Columbus when she was just 14 years old. Known for her low and gravelly voice, Ma Rainey led the way for modern day blues, writing hits such as "Moonshine Blues", "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom", and of course, "Downhearted Blues," which was listed in the Rock n Roll Hall of Fame's list of 500 songs that shaped rock 'n roll. A visionary, Ma was constantly breaking down barriers such as selling out integrated crowds during the days of segregation. People would travel for miles to hear her authoritative voice and see her famous gold teeth. You can visit her childhood home that has been transformed into the Gertrude Ma Rainey House and Blues Museum in Columbus, Georgia. Guests can get a glimpse of what it was truly like being Ma Rainey,

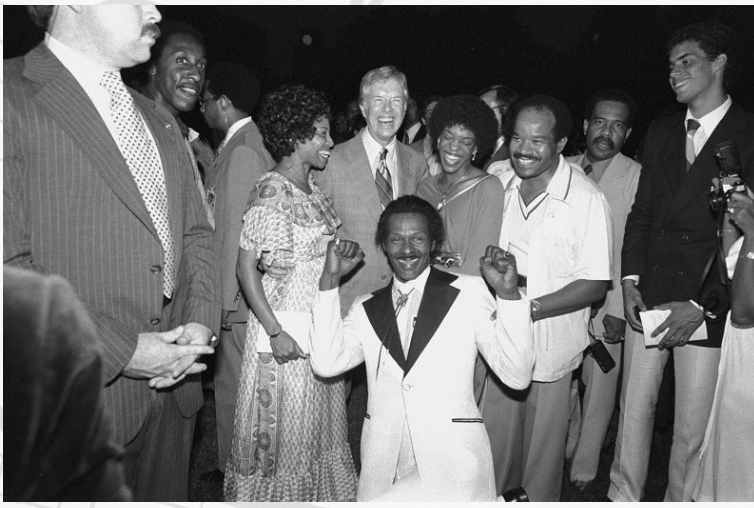
including where she would write many of her songs. Artists writing their own songs was not a common practice in the early 1900's, but of the 94 Blues records she made for Paramount Records, at least 47 were her own compositions. Her work inspired generations of future musical stars including Janis Joplin, Big Mama Thorton, and Dinah Washington. August Wilson, the famed playwright of Fences, was inspired to write a show about Ma Rainey entitled "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom," which had a successful run on Broadway and was made into a Netflix movie in 2020 starring Chadwick Boseman and Viola Davis. Ma passed away in her hometown of Columbus , GA in 1939 from heart disease, but not before she inspired and changed the direction of music for many generations to come.

Not only is Georgia home to many world renowned Black artists, but a former Governor of ours, Jimmy Carter, declared the month of June to be Black Music month in 1979, honoring the contributions of Black musicians, songwriters, and singers to our national musical legacy. To commemorate the day, President Carter staged a concert in Philadelphia featuring artists such as Chuck Berry and the legendary Sara Jordan Powell.

“Black music has always stood on its own — a beacon of resilience and resistance — while at the same time helping to shape countless other musical and cultural traditions. From the syncopated rhythms of jazz to the soulful expressions of R&B, Black music spans an extraordinarily broad spectrum of genres and styles.

President Joe Biden





President Carter with Sara Jordan Powell, Chuck Berry, Billy Eckstein, Evelyn "Champagne" King, and Andréa Crouch

He declared that: "[Black Music] has been an avenue for understanding and friendship that has been effective when politicians could not succeed. In many ways, you've expressed the hope of our country." However, it wasn't until 2000 that President Bill Clinton officially signed the a Presidential Proclamation recognizing June as Black Music Month. In 1979, Georgia commemorated one of its own by making Ray Charles' "Georgia on my Mind" the official state song, forever cementing Ray's legacy as one of Georgia's finest.

On June 9th 2022, Senator Ed Harbison (D - Columbus) hosted a celebration honoring the Radio Legends of Georgia at the Capitol. This program featured renowned Broadcasters from across the state, coming together in adoration of each other and their gifts to the people of Georgia. Sen. Harbison honored icons such as Larry Blackmon, Ryan Cameron, Melissa Summers and many more; with Resolutions celebrating their contributions to Black Music. As important as the musicians were, without radio play they could not get the exposure needed for their music.

In the 70's and 80's there was a big upswing in Black radio hosts, and music such as funk and hip-hop starting to become mainstream, largely thanks to Black radio hosts. They didn't just spin records, rather, Black Disc Jockeys were an indispensable part of the movement that transformed music. Stations shifted from airing classic rock to songs by Black artists such as Earth, Wind, and Fire, and Barry White, skyrocketing them to fame and fortune. From Mary Lou Williams to Gladys Night to Andre 3000, Georgia has been a staple in the music industry thanks to its homegrown Black artists. So next time you hit play on your iPod, just think about what it took to get there, and join us in celebrating Black Music Month.

We are looking forward to pausing during Black Music Month and saluting these radio legends who were instrumental in bringing forth black music, and who were at the forefront of black progress.

Sen. Ed Harbison



Sen. Harbison honoring the Radio Legends of Georgia

## About the Author



Keenan Rogers is from Dunwoody, GA by way of Canada. He has been with the Senate Press Office since 2018 and graduated from Florida State University with a degree in Economics.



# FOURTH OF JULY TRADITIONS

By Sen. Butch Miller, President Pro Tempore



When I think to most holidays, I think, first and foremost to family and friends. I find the Fourth of July to be no different, with fellowship with loved ones being the highlight of the day, accented, of course, by fireworks and neighborhood cookouts. This year will be a special Fourth of July for me, as our family has been blessed to have new members who will be present to celebrate their first Independence Day.

In Gainesville, we have a great many options available to us for celebrating the holidays outdoors. While the mountains are close, the lake is often where I find that freedom is at its most pure. It's just you, your boat and the water. Being out on the lake with your family and friends is a recipe for celebration that cannot be beat, particularly on Independence Day.



I can recall one day out on the lake with one of my sons, our boat happened upon an oncoming one. As we approached, the man behind the wheel gave a wave with his hand and I returned it with a smile. My son looked up at me and asked, "Who was that?" I replied, "I have no idea!" That's what makes holidays on the lake so special. Everyone treats their neighbors with kindness, dignity and respect. Values we should practice each day.



Throughout the years, I have also had the opportunity to participate in some Fourth of July parades in Gainesville. These are a great opportunity for the public to learn more about our country and the foundational freedoms it was built upon. There is no greater patriotic feeling than handing out miniature American flags to kids and watch them, enthusiastically, wave them and embrace the values of our country. I encourage everyone to not miss a similar parade if one occurs in your home town. I believe you will find no better way to share in fellowship with your neighbor than standing by the grill.



As President Ronald Reagan said, on Independence Day, "with heart and hand, through whatever trial and travail, we pledge ourselves to each other and to the cause of human freedom, the cause that has given light to this land and hope to the world." This year, let us take those words to heart and rededicate ourselves to looking out for one another and advancing the causes liberty and freedom, both in our communities and abroad.



# ROLL CALL

Highlighting little known facts about Georgia's 56 State Senate Districts

## What is your favorite part of your district?

The most outstanding aspect of my district is the people and the food. In Gwinnett you can find food and markets with products from every single part of the world. Me and my family love going to restaurants in the Jimmy Carter Boulevard or in the Pleasant Hill Road area. There are also lots of places in the city of Norcross. If you have never been to Gwinnett, I personally encourage you to come and enjoy my amazing district along I-85.

## What is something someone may not know about your district?

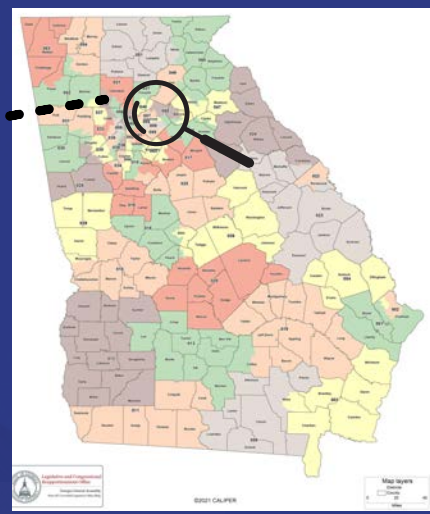
My district has people from over 100 countries that speak over 100 languages. Additionally, people from all 50 states live in Gwinnett. This is unique in the state of Georgia. There is no other district that has that many cultures, languages and religions altogether in the State. My district's demographic is almost like New York, Miami, and San Francisco. This is really impressive. I am proud to represent not only the best of Georgia but the best of the United States.

## What legislative accomplishment are you most proud of that had a positive impact on your district?

After the pandemic, we have seen an incredible need for students to be outdoors and to interact with nature. During the 2022 legislative session I have sponsored a bill for the creation of a pilot program for outdoor learning spaces which would impact health and wellness of all students of this state. I am very passionate about this bill as this legislation would not only impact children on my district but in all the State of Georgia.

## Sen. Sheikh Rahman (D - Lawrenceville)

SD 5



## Senate District 5 by the Numbers

Population: 191,921

Number of Counties: 1  
(Gwinnett)

Biggest City: Lawrenceville



Sen. Sheikh Rahman (D - Lawrenceville)

*At the singing of HB 1303*



# FROM THE WELL

*Opposing Perspectives on Current Issues*



By Andrew Allison

## CELEBRITY TRIALS BANE OR BOON OF SOCIETY?



By Steve Tippins

Each and every time a high-profile celebrity finds themselves as part of a public trial, viewers often can't get enough. Television news and social media are saturated with images, quotes and opinions about the trial. Inevitably, your friends, family and co-workers will all become overnight jurists and will use the Cause Célèbre as an opportunity to educate all within earshot on the specifics of the trial and who, ultimately, will come out the victor.

While we have been down this road many times, the question of the utility of public trials, particularly those involving a celebrity, comes up again and again. Once you get past the marquee names that often find themselves behind witness stands, what you are left with is a person, guilty or innocent, offering their testimony not only to the court, but also to the watching world. A person equally worthy of a fair trial as anyone else. What the every day person generally lacks, however, are hordes of television cameras and journalists giving a live play by play of the court's action. The media frenzy that all too often erupts surrounding these cases are certainly, on occasion, unnecessary. However, these high-profile trials can also serve the public in a number of ways often unmentioned by the media circus.

For example, when a high-profile name comes out to accuse another of wrong-doing, they are inadvertently setting the news agenda for the foreseeable future. Good so shines a light on whatever crime they may or may not be a victim of, thereby bringing more awareness to the issue and empowering others to bring forward similar cases. For example, several years ago, a series of Olympians and other athletes at Michigan State University sought criminal penalties against their trainer, Larry Nassar. The sequence culminated in 2021, when several high-profile Olympic gymnasts testified before Congress and broadcast to the world not only the horrors they endured by Nassar, but also the complacency of the system and lack of accountability. Since the bombshell accusations and the trial and conviction that followed, other athletes have felt comfortable bringing their own cases to the courts. As a consequence legislation has been introduced and adopted in several states (Georgia included) that put further protections in place to prevent similar instances of abuse from occurring in the future. If even a single case of abuse was prevented through the efforts of the brave athletes to confront their attacker, the media can be thanked for amplifying this message and urging on policy action.

Many everyday people have never set foot inside a court room and their only experience comes from Law and Order reruns or from watching the one famous scene from A Few Good Men. While celebrity trials are often hardly an indicator of what an average trial looks like, it does show the public the extraordinary amount of time it takes to get to the truth. For example, the O.J. Simpson trial took about 11 months, with hours of testimony and cross examination from witnesses, subject matter experts and those alleged to have played some role in the crime. Real life does function like a television show. There are no "surprise witnesses" or documents presented that had not first been entered into evidence. Truthfully, most trials offer very little in the way of drama or, at the very least, few true moments of drama over the course of a months-long trial. Allowing the public to see this first-hand (albeit, through a television screen) allows them to adjust perceptions and expectations to get a much better feel for how trials are conducted. If anything, this will show the importance of the Sixth Amendment and how critical it is to leave no stone unturned.

Finally, celebrity trials bring a great deal of attention. With attention comes scrutiny. By offering the public a live look in to the proceedings of a trial, there is an inherent extra layer of accountability. If someone says or does anything wrong, it is not only the opposing counsel or the jury who will see, it will be the entire world. With that knowledge, there is an even greater emphasis on proper conduct. This accountability can occur outside of the court room as well. When Martha Stewart was formally charged with insider trading in 2003, an interesting thing happened to the number of insider trading cases being considered by the SEC. They nearly doubled from roughly 3.8 cases for every 1,000 firms to 6.6 by 2005. While the exact cause of this sudden interest in going after insider trading can't be determined specifically, it stands to reason that the attention surrounding the issue resulting from the Martha Stewart trial had more eyes searching.

While occasionally a nuisance on our news feeds, celebrity trials overall serve the public benefit and should be treated as such, spectacle and all.

Everything old is new again, even saying everything old is new again. It's new for this column, even if it is as tried as trite gets, and from where I'm typing, tried is pretty trite.

Trite pretty well sums up the occasional train wreck we like to call Celebrity Trials, and if you've been paying attention, we had a fairly large one recently. The thing is, celebrity trials have existed for as long as there have been celebrities. Celebrities are just people, too, after all, and people tend to do tremendously stupid things. Tremendously stupid things, in turn, are a good way to wind up pregnant, served, or in the drunk tank, and maybe even all three at once. Celebrity trials are not the harbinger of the apocalypse, regardless of the hedonism often on display; nor are they legends that unlock the mysteries of human existence or the Federal Reserve or anything else. They are not odes to journalism or transparency. And they are not reflections of our perversions. They just are.

As far as celebrity trials go, the Heard-Depp routine was pretty... routine. Somebody cut off a finger. Somebody lied. Somebody, I think, slept with somebody else. Yawn.

My first celebrity trial was the O.J. phenomenon, but that probably has more in common with Salacious Murder Trials than the Celebrity Trial. Think Lizzie Borden. Or Ted Bundy. Even though O.J. was a celebrity prior to the murders, he's best remembered now by anybody under thirty for the grisly events that occurred on June 12, 1994, and for being the butt of a slew of Norm Macdonald jokes on Saturday Night Live... which, now that I mention it, raises an interesting segue: the Celebrity Death. Nobody was laughing at Norm's jokes in real time, except a few die-hards like yours truly. But there's nothing quite like a celebrity's untimely demise to bring people to the YouTube bandwagon...

Celebrity Trials and Celebrity Deaths are a rare pairing, like red wine with fish. But they happen. Plato springs to mind. Jesus, too. But back then, Celebrity Trials were about mundane things like philosophy or the eschaton.

Today, Celebrity Trials are almost always about sex. This has been the case for a while, but especially for that last century or so, when they found a winning formula during the Celebrity Trial of Fatty Arbuckle. Arbuckle was a precursor of comedic artistes from Chaplin to Sandler. He was an original king of comedy, a huge movie star with sinful appetites to satisfy his large frame. In a San Francisco hotel in 1921, he threw a multi-day boozier more in line with Hunter Thompson than Scott Fitzgerald. Among his party goers was a middling actress named Virginia Rappe. At some point amidst the haze and fog of the bacchanalia, the two wound up in a suite alone. A scream brought witnesses to the suite, where they found Rappe writhing in pain. Arbuckle said he had found her in the bathroom. Rappe, before she expired, said either "He did this to me," or some variation. The allegations that arose after her death were heinous: rape; assault; and, yes, murder (technically: manslaughter).

Arbuckle was eventually acquitted, but not before he was blackballed by Hollywood. His movies were shelved. His name removed from marquees. Ask anyone today about Arbuckle, Chaplin, and Keaton, and one of those names is bound to be unknown (turns out Cancel Culture is also nothing new). The scandal that attached to Fatty's trial was the first domino that eventually gave way to Will Hays being hired by the Motion Picture folks. i.e., the Hays Code was about public relations and saving Hollywood from Fatty's stigma more so than it was about censorship or family values or anything else the vote going public gets squawky about.

There's a miniseries (a prestige T.V. show? What do we call these entertainments now? I dunno) currently streaming about another Celebrity Trial – the celebrity divorce of the Duke and Duchess of Argyll. As with most things in the peerage, reality is far more interesting than what the movie handlers shovel us, but only because the implicit subplot of any noble scandal is the eventual fall of the thing the peerage in theory supports: the monarchy. Such a fall has grave consequences, something which Celebrity Trials never can replicate, even when they are about the eschaton. Maybe even especially when they are bout the eschaton. But to understand why requires us to understand some ecclesiology and who has time for that when we can read about Jack Sparrow slicing off his finger? It's a conundrum as old as time.



# ISN'T IT TRUE?

## MYSTERIES BENEATH THE MARBLE TILES

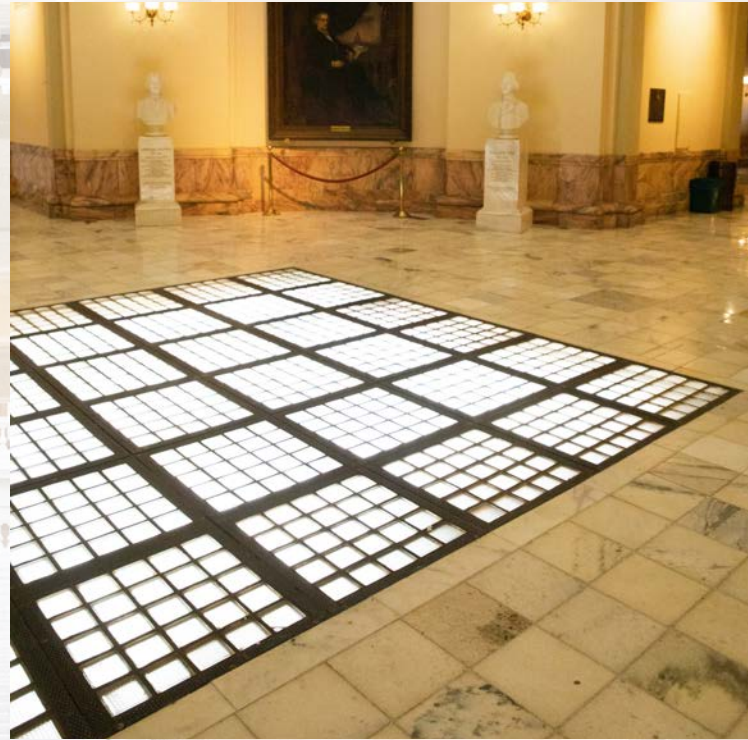
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If you ever traveled to the Capitol for a school field trip (or if you have worked here long enough) than you might have heard once before (or possibly more than once) the many infamous tales about the basement of the Capitol. As exciting as these may sound, we are here to enlighten you on these stories as well as disprove a few outlandish ones.

Perhaps the most commonly told story about the basement is that of the horse stables located beneath the marble tiles. It has often been said that during the late 19th century, the lowest grounds of the Capitol housed legislator's horses while they conducted their business on the floors above. No one is quite sure how the story began - the translucent glass paneling that lines the north and south wing and Rotunda area perhaps? It has also been said that the heat given off from the many horses helped to heat the Capitol building during winter months. As interesting as it may sound, when you get down to the nuts and bolts of it, you will likely discover a few cracks in the story. In fact, during the late 19th century, many politicians and businessmen utilized various alternative means of transportation to commute to the Capitol each day.

While the famous Ford Model T did not roll off the production line until the early 1900's, horse drawn buggies or electric street cars and trolleys were quite common during the mid to late 1800's. Invented by American Engineer Frank Julian Sprague, the electric streetcar resembled that of a common railroad car and was powered by an overhead electric wire. In the early 1880's, the Fulton County Street Railroad Co. formed what was known as the "Nine-Mile Circle," stretching from Downtown Atlanta to present day Virginia Highlands. So, as you can see, housing over 200 horses beneath the grounds of the Capitol would not have been the most efficient use of the space considering the abundance of new technology in the area. Not to mention the general upkeep that would follow caring for that many horses. However, the idea cannot totally be thrown out the window as it has also been said that while the horses may not have been housed beneath the Capitol, there are rumors of a so-called "horse parking deck" located across the street from the Capitol.

The truth behind the Capitol basement is in fact that the space below was used as storage and office space. The transparent glass paneling you see on the second floor were used as a way to allow light into the grounds below due to the fact that there were no windows. Interestingly enough, it is said that the metal framing is original to the structure of the Capitol. Today, the basement of the Capitol is no longer used with the first floor being reserved for office spaces.



The glass frames in the Capitol Rotunda (pictured above) were used to allow light into the offices spaces below. The metal framing is the original framing from the late 19th century.



Electric streetcars like the one pictured above were commonly used as public transportation throughout the 19th century.  
*Photo Courtesy of the Atlanta History Center*



# ADJOURNMENT

## A MOMENT IN GEORGIA HISTORY

JUNE & JULY

A NUMBER OF SIGNIFICANT HISTORICAL EVENTS THAT OCCURRED IN GEORGIA DURING THE MONTHS OF JUNE AND JULY

**June 1868**

The Atlanta Constitution (now known as the Atlanta Journal Constitution) published its first issue

**The Atlanta Journal-Constitution**

**June 1, 1892**

Grady Hospital opened in Atlanta, Georgia



**June 1936**

Margaret Mitchell's iconic novel *Gone With the Wind* was published.



**June 1929**

Delta Air Lines began its first passenger service flights from Dallas, Texas to Jackson, Mississippi



**June 1887**

Atlanta pharmacist John Stith Pemberton registered the patent for the formula now known as Coca-Cola. It wasn't until nearly 100 years later, in 1985, that the Coca-Cola Company debuted the original formula as "Classic Coke."



**June 1965**

Grace Towns Hamilton became the first African American woman elected to the Georgia General Assembly



**July 1946**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) was established in Atlanta, Georgia



**July 31, 1960**

The Atlanta International Raceway (now known as the Atlanta Motor Speedway) hosted its first race



**June 1979**

MARTA opened its first rail line (the east line) in Atlanta, Georgia. The fare was only twenty-five cents

